3: Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
NO6 Comanche NO6

174
619
[262]

so named because they always had plenty of buffalo meat. Buffalo meat was the principal food of all Comanches, but this particular division, whose favorite haunt during the nineteenth century was the Canadian River valley, may well have been more dependent upon that animal, since they were in a favorite rendezvous of the buffalo herds. They established relations with the Spaniards in New Mexico early in the eighteenth century, and after peace was established in 1786, *Comancheros* (traders from New Mexico settlements) visited them frequently and called them *Cuchaneo* or *Cuchantica*. The eastern and southern members of this group likewise came to be well known to the Spaniards in Texas; in fact, they are commonly referred to in the documents of the Bexar archives as Texas or Eastern Comanches. They were noted as a band which was ever out on a raid. An emissary, Francisco Xavier Ortiz, whom Governor de Anza sent in 1786 to visit them, reported that in an area about one hundred miles square between the Pecos and Red rivers, he found eight *rancherías;* that the smallest had thirty tents; all eight together had about seven hundred. He further reported that there were three to four warriors to the tent, which would give an estimated population of between six and seven thousand; on the basis of what we know about the Comanches, this was an exaggeration, although his claim that they owned nine hundred horses and mules is quite credible.[19]

[222 262]

The northernmost part of the Comanche country was occupied by the populous and important band of "Yap-eaters," *Yapainə*, or *Yamparikə*, eaters of a potato-like root called *Yɛp* by the Shoshones, but *Yap'* by the Comanches. As the band closest to the Shoshones, and as the band that clung to Shoshone food-getting habits, digging for roots, they were probably the last of the Comanche bands to break off. Indeed, the Fort Hall Shoshones, in Idaho (who still think *they* are the people—*nɜm*) call all Comanches *Yamparika*. In earlier times this band had been called *Widyu* (Awl), according to Mooney, but because the use of the word became tabu, as in the case of the *Nokoni*, it was changed to *Ditsakana* (Sewers), which conveys the same idea.[20]

[19] A. B. Thomas, *Forgotten Frontiers*, 73, 290–91.

[20] Apparently also spelled *Titchakenah* (Those Who Make Bags While Moving). It is maintained on good authority that the *Titchakenah* was once a separate band who before the reservation days had become a portion of the *Yamparika* band. See Agent Clark to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, "Report," May 18, 1881, *loc. cit.*

. 3. Wallace & Hoebel E-4. 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
NO6 Comanche NO6

252 plucked out and it was flung into the fire or red coals. When one would suppose that there was nothing left to the bird, the burnt, black mess was raked out, left to partially cool, then with dexterous movement of the knife the skin is peeled or stripped from the neck downwards taking the burned feathers, revealing a white and tempting morsel to a hungry man. It was then cut and torn apart.[10]

252 262 Even when game was plentiful, the Comanche taste for certain foods would not appeal to us. When a buffalo, beef, deer, antelope, or elk was killed, it was not uncommon for a hunter and his family to gather about, open its veins, and drink the warm blood. Raw brains and the marrow from the leg bones were stirred together on the flesh side of the hide or in a dish made by cutting out a section of the slaughtered animal's ribs, and were consumed without further preparation. The fresh, warm liver covered with the contents of the gall bladder was considered one of the finest delicacies. Children crowded around the butcher and begged for it. Liver cooked on coals and spread with rich marrow also formed a choice dish. Entrails stripped of their contents by drawing them between two fingers, kidneys, paunch, loin tallow, and the tallow around the kidneys were all eaten raw while still warm and without washing. A Comanche would cut into the udder of an animal and, placing his mouth on the gash, suck the warm mixture of milk and blood with the greatest of pleasure. The curdled milk from the stomach of a suckling fawn or calf was a delicacy indeed. Herman Lehmann also refers to their having eaten the heart, but this appears to have been unusual, for it was generally left within the skeleton,[11] probably a ceremonial gesture to propitiate the animal spirit. These appetites may have been indelicate from our point of view, but they provided an effective way to get vitamins and iron in large quantities. The Comanche would have had the hearty approval of the modern dietitian.

222 Although buffalo meat was their dietary mainstay, the Comanches did not suffer the unrelieved monotony of boiled stew and jerked

[10] R. G. Carter, *On the Border with MacKenzie*, 279.

[11] Herman Lehmann, *Nine Years among the Indians*, 115, 116; Smithwick, *op. cit.*, 180.

3: Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
NO6 Comanche NO6

meat. They raised no vegetables of their own, yet they came from a background of food gatherers and did not forget their heritage. They utilized a large number of vegetables and fruits. Women did most of the seeking for plants, but even the men knew what was growing about them and how to use it. G. G. Carlson and V. H. Jones have given the expert judgment that "the average Comanche has a very good knowledge of his plant environment and particularly of those plants which are or have been of value to his tribe."[12] Fifty-two wild plants with their uses as given by Comanche informants in the work of the Santa Fé Laboratory group are listed by Carlson and Jones. Of these, twenty-seven different plants were used as food. It would seem that this number would compare rather favorably with the variety of fruits and vegetables eaten by most Americans today. Twenty-two of the listed plants were used for medicinal effect in the Comanche native pharmacology.

The facts, when marshaled, simply do not support the statement of Captains R. B. Marcy and G. B. McClellan that fresh meat was the only food of the Comanches "with the exception of a few wild plants which they find on the prairies."[13]

Among the fruits, the persimmon, mulberry, "haws," wild plums, grapes and currants, juniper berries, hackberries, prickly pear cactus, and sumac were gathered. Persimmons were eaten fresh and also dehydrated and stored. For storing, the persimmon was beaten to a pulp, the seeds removed, and the paste sun-dried in cakes. The cakes were later soaked in water and used in a variety of ways. Plums were eaten fresh or stored for winter use in a similar manner, as were also grapes. Prickly pears were sun-dried for winter use, and hackberries were pulped, mixed with fat, and roasted in balls on the end of a stick.

Pecan nuts were an obvious delicacy for any Indians living in Texas or Oklahoma, and if times were hard, the Comanches shelled and boiled the acorn of the blackjack oak.

For starchy substance all Comanche bands dug and ate the tuberous roots of Indian potato, either raw or boiled—and one band, remember, was even called the *Yep-eaters*. Four or five other root plants,

[12] G. G. Carlson and V. H. Jones, "Some Notes on Uses of Plants by the Comanche Indians," *Papers* of the Michigan Academy of Science, Arts, and Letters, Vol. XXV (1940), 518.

[13] Marcy, *Exploration of the Red River of Louisiana in the year 1852*, 111.

3: Wallace & Hoebel E-4. 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
NO6 Comanche NO6

like wild onions, radishes, and Jerusalem artichoke were also exploited—nor was the bulb of the sego lily overlooked.

A truly favorite sweet dish for the Comanche was a mush made of buffalo marrow mixed with crushed mesquite beans, which are very high in sugar-content.

Dried pumpkins, pumpkin seeds, and corn were obtained in trade from the Kiowas, Wichitas, and other tribes to the east. Corn was not really used very much, although the Comanches did like to make a drink of boiled corn meal sweetened with mesquite. If they had let this concoction ferment, as did the Gila River tribes of Arizona, they could have had an alcoholic mead, but the Comanches did not know how to brew beer or ferment wines from their grapes.

Tobacco was obtained in trade with the Mexicans and not grown at all.

Honey added flavor to the Comanche diet. So highly in favor was it that one band received the name *Penatɜkə* or Honey-eaters. The honey bee seems to have been abundant along the Cross Timbers of the eastern Comanchería. Honey was bagged in skin containers and could be kept indefinitely.

The original K-ration was pemmican, beloved of the Comanches and many other tribes of Indians. Wild berries, cherries, or plums, pounded well and partially dried in the sun, or walnuts, piñons, or pecans gave flavor to the dried meat, which was pounded thoroughly, softened over a fire, and then mixed with the pounded fruit or nuts. Tallow and marrow fat were added, and the mixture was stored either in parfleche bags (ɔyɔ:t), in large intestines which probably had been no more than partially cleaned, or in paunches. Before the container was firmly tied, melted tallow was sometimes poured over the whole to make it air tight. In either container, the pemmican with proper care would keep for years. It was greatly prized by the whites, particularly when sliced and dipped in honey. They called it "Indian bread," for since the Comanches had no bread, this was the nearest substitute. Children went about eating it as American children eat candy. When other foods were available, dried meat and pemmican were saved for times of food scarcity.

It was generally believed by the whites that the Comanches had no regular times for meals, that they ate at all hours of the day or

5: Carlson & Jones E, N-4, 5 (1933)1939
NO6 Comanche NO6

824 were preserved for later use. The manner of preparation and storage
262 is of considerable interest.

824 The fruits of the persimmon (*Diospyros virginiana*) were eaten
262 fresh or were dried and stored for future comsumption. The per-
251 simmon was commonly used in this manner by various tribes in the southern prairies and in the Southeast, and it is frequently mentioned in early historical accounts. The common method of preparation for storage seems to have been to beat the ripe fruits to a pulp, remove the seeds, and dry the paste. The cakes thus formed were later softened in water and prepared in various ways for eating. The persimmon has achieved little commercial importance, but is still widely used and esteemed by Indians and whites wherever it is available. An informant also described a black persimmon (Comanche: *dunaseika*) obtained in Texas and Mexico. This was doubtless the Mexican persimmon (*Brayodendron texanum*), which occurs from central Texas southwestward into Mexico.

The fruits of the mulberry (*Morus rubra*) were eaten fresh, when ripe, but no attempt was made to store them. This species is the one most generally preferred by Indians, from the Iroquois country to Kansas and Missouri and southward.

The fresh ripe fruits of two hawthorns or "haws" (*Crataegus spp.*) were eaten by the Comanche. According to an informant, one should shout like a wolf before partaking of them, or he will be sure to get stomach-ache and constipation. An indication of the wide use of Crataegus fruits is a list, compiled by Yanovsky (27, pp. 30–31), of eleven species used by various tribes of Indians from the eastern states to California and British Columbia.

The Comanche names for several wild "plums" were recorded, including designations for early plums, late summer plums, and fall plums. It is quite likely that some of the "plums" are wild cherries or chokecherries. Only one was collected, the Chickasaw plum (*Prunus angustifolia*). The fruits of this species were either eaten fresh or stored for winter use. Another kind of plum (Comanche: *su:kui*) was also said to be stored after the seeds had been removed and the fruits dried on a hide in the sun. Later they were boiled in water and eaten. In the winter the Indians sometimes obtained
● [222] plums by tracking pack rats to their nests and taking the hoarded supply.

Several species of wild grapes (*Vitis spp.*) were available to the

5: Carlson & Jones E, N-4, 5 (1933)1939
NO6 Comanche NO6

Plant remedies played a part in the Comanche treatment of venereal diseases. The root of the thistle (*Cirsium undulatum*) was boiled and the liquid drunk in cases of gonorrhea. Another medicinal drink for gonorrhea was prepared by making an infusion of the stems of an unidentified plant (Comanche: *mawitsɔkᵛ*). Syphilitic sores were treated with the ashes of the stems of little bluestem grass (*Andropogon scoparius*).

Two plants were used by the Comanche, in much the same manner, for both toothache and sore throat. For toothache the root of the purple coneflower (*Echinacea sp.*) or the bark of the root of the prickly ash (*Zanthoxylum americanum*) was held against the tooth to relieve pain. In cases of sore throat the root of the coneflower was boiled in water and the liquid drunk, or the inner bark of the prickly ash was ground and placed in the throat. This similarity may indicate some association of tooth and throat troubles in the minds of the Comanche, but it very likely has no significance, since both plants were general cure-alls among various tribes. The Cheyenne utilized Echinacea for the same purposes, and the methods of application were only slightly different (9, p. 188). Echinacea was an important medicinal plant among the tribes of the Missouri River region, where its use for toothache was identical with that of the Comanche, but no mention is made of it as a cure for sore throat (7, p. 131).

Three plants were prescribed for the treatment of "sore eyes." The root of the Osage orange (*Maclura pomifera*) was boiled in water and the decoction used to bathe them; the stems of willow (*Salix sp.*) were burned and the eyes treated with the ashes; and the sap of the prickly poppy (*Argemone intermedia*) was administered to the eyes. It was said that in gathering this latter plant offerings in the form of beads or other objects were made to it.

A tea for "stomach trouble" was prepared from the roots of *Eriogonum longifolium*, and the leaves of mesquite (*Prosopis glandulosa*) were chewed, and the juice swallowed, to relieve acid stomach. A remedy for constipation was a drink made by boiling the stems of an unidentified plant (Comanche: *mawitsɔkᵛ*).

The bark of the prickly ash (*Zanthoxylum americanum*) was mixed with water and the decoction drunk as a cure for fever. Two other plants were also specified for the treatment of fever. The leaves of one of these (Comanche: *poiya*) were mixed with an herb (unknown

12: Canonge L-5 (ca. 1950-1955) 1958 NO6 Comanche NO6
Oklahoma

XXXIII

599 1. soobe?ʌkʌtsa?$_1$ rʌa$_2$ nʌmʌnʌʌ$_3$ tamutʌso?ihunu?betu$_4$ pomami?anu$_5$. 2. surʌʌkʌse?$_1$ soohuuhkaba$_2$ nobitʌnu$_3$. 3. uku$_1$ bʌi$_2$ kwabihkakʌse?$_3$ surʌʌ$_4$, —soohtuku$_5$ ma?$_6$ bʌewatsi?$_7$ mubipó?roo?katʌ$_8$. taa$_9$ muhyi$_{10}$ ʌʌ?ka$_{11}$ kʌhtaaku$_{12}$ rahtʌmi?inu$_{13}$.— mekʌse?$_{14}$ surʌʌ$_{15}$. 4. —etʌtsa?$_1$ bʌewatsi?$_2$ mubipó?roo?$_3$ taa$_4$ narʌhka?a$_5$ tai$_6$ tʌhkakʌtu?i$_7$,— mekʌ$_8$. 5. sitʌʌkʌse?$_1$ pomami?anu$_2$, na?kʌhtaba?i?a$_3$ sooko$_4$ bomanu$_5$, tʌasa$_6$ tuhpokóo?a$_7$. 6. pʌʌ$_1$ pomapʌha$_2$ pibianarʌsokʌ$_3$ rʌbakinu$_4$. 7. si?anetʌ$_1$ sitʌʌ$_2$ pʌʌ$_3$ kahnikʌhu$_4$ mi?anu$_5$. 8. pʌʌ$_1$ kahnikʌ$_2$ marii$_3$ bitʌhka$_4$, setʌʌ$_5$ marʌʌ$_6$ nanawa?ihpʌ?anʌʌ$_7$, —etʌʌtukutsa?$_8$ bʌewatsi?$_9$ mubipó?roo?$_{10}$ taa$_{11}$ narʌhka?a$_{12}$ sʌʌmʌrʌhka?i$_{13}$. —

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1. Long ago$_1$, it is said$_2$, Indians$_3$ went to pick$_5$ along Briar Creek$_4$. 2. Those ones$_1$ camped$_3$ among much timber$_2$. 3. When$_3$ they$_2$ slept$_3$ there$_1$, /those ones$_4$/ those ones$_{15}$ said$_{14}$. —There is$_6$ (are) many$_8$ wild$_7$ pigs$_8$. You all$_{11}$ shut$_{13}$ our$_9$ doors$_{10}$ tightly$_{12}$.— 4. —Those various$_1$ wild$_2$ pigs$_3$ will eat$_7$ our$_4$ groceries$_5$ for$_7$ us$_6$,— (they) said$_8$. 5. These ones$_1$ went to pick$_2$, (they) picked$_3$ much$_4$ (many) pecans$_5$, also$_6$ a black berry (tree)$_7$. 6. (They) loaded$_4$ their$_1$ pickings$_2$ in big sacks$_3$. 7. At this place$_1$ these ones$_2$ went$_3$ to$_4$ their$_5$ camp$_4$. 8. When$_4$ they$_3$ came$_4$ to$_2$ their$_1$ camp$_2$ /those various$_3$/ their$_4$ womenfolk$_7$ said$_{14\ 15}$. —Those various$_8$ wild$_9$

222

XXXV

539 1. soobe?ʌkʌtsa?$_1$ rʌa$_2$ atabitsinʌʌ$_3$ su?ana$_4$ nobitʌnu$_5$.
2. surʌʌkʌse?$_1$ narʌhka?tsu?manu$_2$. 3. urʌʌ$_1$ nanawa?ihpʌ-
?anʌʌkʌse?$_2$ pʌʌ$_3$ kahni$_4$ yʌkwinu$_5$. 4. urʌʌmatʌkʌse?$_1$,
—tanʌwitsa$_2$ ohʌhi$_3$ ma$_4$ pia?ʌmahpaakʌhi$_5$ kʌrʌ?atsiha$_6$
taa$_7$ yʌihtʌhkaru?iha$_8$ ahwemi?anu$_9$.— 5. sitʌkʌse?$_1$ si-
?anetʌ$_2$ pʌʌ$_3$ ku?wʌhora?a$_4$ himahtsi$_5$, sukʌhu$_6$ ʌmahpa$_7$-
kʌhu$_7$ mi?anu$_8$. 6. tahkwe?yu?itsi$_1$, pʌʌ$_2$ muhpe?ma?ai$_3$
makʌhu$_4$ weenu$_5$, tʌmarʌʌmoaku$_6$ sihka$_7$ kʌrʌ?atsiha$_8$
ahwénu$_9$. 7. sʌmʌ?kʌse?$_1$ urʌʌmatʌ$_2$, —keta?ka$_3$ mubisi-
tʌʌ$_4$ mahka$_5$ tai$_6$ ahweku$_7$.— me$_8$ urii$_9$ niikwiiyu$_{10}$.
8. sitʌkʌse?$_1$ si?anetʌ$_2$ pʌʌ$_3$ ahwepʌha$_4$ narʌsokoko$_5$
noohtsi$_6$, pʌʌ$_7$ kahnikʌhu$_8$ mi?anu$_9$. 9. sitʌʌ$_1$ pitʌnu$_2$.
10. pʌʌ$_1$ kahnikʌku$_2$ kohtoo?etʌtsi$_3$, sihka$_4$ pʌʌ$_5$ ahwe-
pʌha$_6$ tʌkʌhmaninu$_7$. 11. sʌsʌmʌ?$_1$ marʌʌkʌ$_2$ tsuhnipʌma?-
aihku$_3$ ma$_4$ karʌkʌnu$_5$. 12. sʌsʌmʌ?kʌse?$_1$ pʌmʌ$_2$ u$_3$

<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<< >>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>

539 1. Long ago$_1$, it is said$_2$, other tribe of Indians$_3$ camped$_4$
there somewhere$_4$. 2. Those ones$_1$ ran out of groceries$_2$.
222 3. Their$_1$ women folk$_2$ set up$_3$ their$_3$ teepee$_4$. 4. One of
262 them$_1$ (said), —We ought to$_2$ go dig$_3$ water lily roots$_4$ in
that$_5$ /this$_4$/ big lake$_5$ /in/ /what$_8$/ [which] we$_7$ will eat for
supper$_8$.— 5. These ones$_1$ at this place$_2$ takings their$_3$ hoes$_4$,
went$_8$ there$_6$ to (the) lake$_7$. 6. Taking off (their) shoes$_1$,
with$_3$ their$_2$ hoes$_3$ went down$_5$ in it$_4$, (and) dug up$_9$ a lot of$_6$
these$_7$ water lily roots$_8$. 7. One$_1$ of them$_3$ said$_9$ $_{10}$ to them$_9$,
—Don't$_3$ blow your noses$_4$ as$_7$ we$_6$ dig$_7$ this$_5$.— 8. These ones$_1$
at this place$_2$, carrying$_6$ their$_3$ diggings$_4$ in sacks$_5$, went$_7$ to$_8$
539 their$_7$ camp$_8$. 9. These ones$_1$ arrived$_2$. 10. Each one mak-
262 ing a fire$_3$ in$_2$ their$_1$ homes$_2$ (they) cooked$_7$ /this$_4$/ their$_5$
252 diggings$_6$. 11. Some$_1$ of them$_2$ boiled$_3$ it$_4$ with bones$_3$.
12. Some$_1$ /themselves$_2$/ fried$_4$ it$_3$ in$_4$ that$_3$ fat$_4$. 13. One$_1$

22: Dacus Q-3 (no date) 1960 NO6 Comanche NO6
(ca. 1870)

By J. A. Dacus

Popular author and member of the staff of the St. Louis Republican, 1871-80. Condensed from an article in Ware's Valley Monthly, Volume I, Number 1, St. Louis, May, 1875.

The Comanches: An Ethnological Sketch

(ca 1870)

The Comanches number about fifteen thousand souls. Their former range extended from the sources of the Rio Brazos and Rio Colorado, of Texas, northward to the Canadian, and westward to the mountains of Colorado and New Mexico, and thence southward to the Rio Grande and the Mexican settlements of Nueva Leon and Coahuila. They are generally classed with the great nomadic Apache family. But the points of resemblance, I believe, are not sufficiently distinct to justify the classification. In form, feature, and language they have little likeness or affinity to the Apaches. Their traditions and symbolism and language, all point to a relationship with the Shoshones. The difference in the language spoken by these tribes is only dialectal. The separation must have taken place in the remote past. The cause which led to that separation, it is probable, will never be ascertained.

The name, Comanche, by which the people under consideration are distinguished, is not of their own bestowal. They call themselves *Neum*, which signifies men—the first, or original men. It is probable that their present name is a corruption of the Spanish word comenzar (pronounced comanthar), which signifies "to begin." The Comanches assert that they are THE *men*—the beginning men—or first men. In the effort to impart their distinctive claim, to strangers, they no doubt made use of signs signifying a commencement or beginning, and hence received from the early Spanish adventurers the title, *Los Pueblos Comenzar*: "The people to begin," or the beginning people. It was afterward corrupted to Comanche, instead of Comenzar.

The Comanches are nomads, but not pastoral. They have horses, but keep no cattle, or sheep. They not do cultivate the soil, and confess themselves ignorant of the simplest arts of agriculture. Their food is procured by the chase. The women sometimes collect a few roots and plants, and some of the indigenous fruits of the plains, such as plums, certain kinds of berries, and the fig-like fruits of a species of cactus found on the Wichita

[p. 333]

22: Dacus Q-3 (no date) 1900 NO6 Comanche NO6
(ca. 1870)

[ca 1870]

222 [462] Mountains. But these collections form a very small part of the food necessary to sustain life.

224 462 The animals killed in the chase are skinned, cut up, and brought to camp by the women, who follow the hunters for that purpose. The whole 262 of the carcass is utilized. The entrails are regarded as appetizing morsels. [263] They rarely use any condiment with their meat. When brought home, the [462] women kindle fires and proceed to partly roast the choice pieces for their lords. The poorest pieces of flesh they may be permitted to reserve for themselves.

411 The Comanches are expert horsemen and skillful archers. The iron-tipped arrow impelled from a Comanche's *bois d'arc* bow, is a dangerous missile. They easily send it through an inch board; and I have seen the rib of an old bullock shattered by one of those arrows.

462 Among them, the women are the most abject slaves. The men do nothing, 562 except to follow the chase, go on the war-path, or decorate themselves with feathers and paint. Even this last operation conducive to manly vanity, sometimes falls to the task of the female slaves of the lodge. The slaughtered animals on the plains are brought in by them; the skins are dressed by women, fuel is collected; the herds of ponies are watched; plumes are made, the paint bags are kept in order; the tents or lodges are erected; food is prepared; and, if after performing all these services the Comanche lady finds time heavy on her hands, she is made to minister to the pleasure of her sovereign lord by adorning his buckskin leggings with delicate splotches of paint, and graceful tufts of feather plucked from the prairie eagle; to streak his face with vermillion, yellow ochre, and charcoal, until he appears in all the glory of a full fledged dandy, and then he saunters 562 forth to exhibit his charms to the susceptible maidens of his tribe. The 593 wife, or the daughter, must, at least apparently, be delighted at the magnificent "make up" of the dandy husband or father. Theirs is not the privilege to complain.

Among the Comanches, all women occupy the position of slaves. The daughter is the slave to the father; the wife to the husband, and if there 593 are any who do not occupy the relationship of daughter or wife, they are slaves to some male relative, or to the tribe. The father sells his daughter 583 in marriage, and the husband may sell his wife for a pony, a shining piece of silver, or a handful of beads.

562 The women can form no ties, make no bargain, and exercise no choice in social or domestic relations. The father selects a husband for his daugh- 583 ter, exacts a consideration, if she proves agreeable to the chosen son-in-law, and consigns her to him, to do with her as he will. She becomes his slave, 593

31: Jones E-5 (1967-1970) 1972 NO6 Comanche NO6
Oklahoma

175 178 624 man, if he was fortunate, could become a peace chief, but a peace chief possessed no real authority and functioned most importantly as a mediator in the disputes which arose among the younger men.

175 178 224 With the greater food supply offered by the seemingly boundless bison herds, hunting magic decreased in importance. Antelope magic did persist from the Shoshone heritage. The more favorable living conditions and constant food supply also allowed the individual bands, which had retained their Basin characteristics, to become larger and to achieve a greater degree of independence from their sister bands. The emphasis on the buffalo as a food source also tended to decrease the importance of gathering and exploitation of the floral environment for food. Further, the Comanches made little or no use of fish and of such small game as rabbits (Lowie 1954:6).

175 178 847 727 562 593 309 The Basin Shoshone practice of infanticide disappeared as the family group could more efficiently care for its offspring. The practice of enculturating slaves and captives became common among the Comanches in order to augment their numbers and specifically to free males for hunting and warfare. The stress on war and hunting also tended to debase the position of women, and such practices as the mutilation of wives, a custom which had never occurred in Basin Shoshone culture, came into practice.

175 178 77 776 775 778 775 954 578 721 796 Patterns of religious belief and behavior also underwent certain changes from Basin life to the Plains. A vaguely defined belief in a Great Spirit persisted, as did the relative lack of concern with the afterlife. However, the intense fear of ghosts held by the Basin Shoshone diminished in the Comanche Plains culture. Also, the practice of power transmission from individual to individual, instead of power source to individual, developed in importance. The decrease in ghost fear and, it is assumed, witchcraft in Comanche culture, as opposed to the Basin culture, was greatly facilitated by the lessening of intrasocial tensions and the Comanches' ability, through warfare, to turn aggressions outward and away from the primary group. As a whole, Comanche religious patterns were exceedingly simple and lacking in elaborate ceremonialism and ritual, at least compared to their Plains neighbors (Hoebel 1940:83).

175 171 628 575 796 291 342 The Comanches possessed characteristics, other than their paucity of ceremonialism, which served to differentiate them from other Plains tribes. The Comanche bands were more self-managing than bands found among other Plains groups. Warrior societies, a diagnostic trait of Plains culture, were lacking in Comanche society except in the most rudimentary form. The Sun Dance was not a vital aspect of Comanche culture. Decoration of clothing with beads, quills, and ornaments of bone, shell, and metal was deemphasized, while heavy fringing of the garments was the rule. The Comanche tepee was built on a four-pole base like that of the Blackfoot, Sarsi, Ute, and Shoshone; while the Comanches' historic neighbors, such as the Kiowa, Cheyenne, Arapaho, and Kiowa-Apache used a three-pole foundation (Lowie 1954:33).

72 224 By the early nineteenth century the bison herds were greatly diminished on the south Plains, and the Comanches increasingly turned to raiding to augment their economy. During this period the Comanches raided New Mexico, the Santa Fe Trail, northern Texas, and Old Mexico, sometimes as far south as Durango.